

the Bill of Rights and the role of citizenship in our democracy.

After winning the state competition in Colorado in December 2001, this team set their sights on the national competition in Washington, DC. They spent countless hours preparing their presentations, debating the issues and practicing their speeches. Each student was responsible for a brief statement and had to be prepared to answer questions from the judges. As a result of their intensive studies, these students acquired a very high level of proficiency on the subject of the U.S. Constitution, American history and federal case law. I have no doubt that they will use this knowledge to participate more fully in the civic life of their communities, and I wouldn't be surprised if one or several of them eventually serve in Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank these young people and Mr. Warmack for taking such a strong interest in their government. I congratulate them on finishing in the top ten in the nation at the "We the People" competition. I am both honored and proud to have such excellent young minds in the 2nd Congressional District.

SPACE EXPLORATION ACT OF 2002

HON. NICK LAMPSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 15, 2002

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, as you know, much of my attention these days has been on the International Space Station. I, along with other Members, am fighting hard to restore the capabilities that the Administration has tried to cut from this important program. We need a Space Station that has the crew size, the research capabilities, the habitation facilities, and the crew rescue vehicles that successive Congresses and Administrations have supported. And we need to keep our commitments to our international partners on this program. It is going to be a tough fight, but as Gene Kranz was fond of saying: "failure is not an option".

However, I don't think that our current struggles over the Space Station should divert us from the fact that we are facing a much deeper crisis—a crisis of commitment. The nation's human space flight program is adrift, with no clear commitment to any goals after the completion of the Space Station. I'd like to talk about that today, and I'd like to offer a way forward for the nation that I think can revitalize our space program, energize our industrial and academic sectors, and inspire our young people.

It was 41 years ago this month that the United States took its first, halting steps in the human exploration of space. On May 5, 1961 Alan Shepard was launched on a fifteen-minute suborbital flight. A month before, the very first human flew in space when the Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin completed a single orbit of the Earth.

It was an exciting time. At the end of May of that year, a young, energetic President Kennedy announced that the United States intended to land a man on the Moon by the end

of the decade. The so-called "Space Race" was on! Yet, five hundred years from now, I don't think our descendants will look back at the Apollo moon landings as just an interesting example of the geopolitical rivalries that marked the twentieth century. Instead, I think that the real significance of Apollo will be that it marked the first major step in humanity's journey outward into the solar system.

Would anyone who watched Neil Armstrong step onto the lunar surface for the first time in 1969 believe that three decades later we would still be stuck in Earth orbit? Certainly not me. And I still find it hard to believe.

That is not to diminish what the United States has accomplished in space over the last thirty years. We have sent space probes to every planet in the solar system except Pluto. We have built and continue to operate the world's first reusable space shuttle. And as we speak, we have a permanent crew orbiting overhead in the first truly international space station. We should all take pride in what has been accomplished to date. But we should not be satisfied.

It is now thirty years since the last American—the last representative of Planet Earth—left the surface of the Moon and returned to Earth. And we haven't ventured outward since that time. In my opinion, that's thirty years too long!

We have a solar system to explore. We need to find out if there is life beyond Earth. And we need to build the space-based observatories and research stations that will allow us to search for Earth-like plants around other stars. Space exploration is not about robotic spacecraft versus astronauts. Rather it is about using both robots and humans to explore and to gather knowledge.

I thus am introducing today the "Space Exploration Act of 2002." I am pleased to have bipartisan support with Representatives RALPH HALL, LAMAR SMITH, GENE GREEN, KEN BENTSEN, SHEILA JACKSON-LEE, BRAD CARSON and MARTIN FROST as original cosponsors. Some may say we can't afford a mission to Mars at this time. Maybe so, but my bill says that while Mars is the ultimate destination for a phased program of exploring the inner solar system, there are preliminary voyages of exploration and science that we can and should start preparing for now . . . voyages that will help us prepare for the exploration and eventual settlement of Mars—while having great scientific merit in their own right.

The "Space Exploration Act of 2002" requires the NASA Administrator to set the following goals for the future activities of NASA's human spaceflight program:

Within 8 years of enactment, the development and flight demonstration of a reusable space vehicle capable of carrying humans from low earth orbit to the L1 and L2 Earth-Sun libration points and back, to the Earth-Moon libration points and back, and to lunar orbit and back.

Within 10 years of enactment, the development and flight demonstration of a reusable space vehicle capable of carrying humans from low Earth orbit to and from an Earth-orbit crossing asteroid and rendezvousing with it.

Within 15 years of enactment, the development and flight demonstration of a reusable space vehicle capable of carrying humans from lunar orbit to the surface of the Moon

and back, as well as the deployment of a human-tended habitation and research facility on the lunar surface.

Within 20 years of enactment, the development and flight demonstration of a reusable space vehicle capable of carrying humans from Martian orbit, the deployment of a human-tended habitation and research facility on the surface of a Martian moon, and the development and flight demonstration of a reusable space vehicle capable of carrying humans from Martian orbit to the surface of Mars and back.

The bill establishes an Office of Exploration within NASA, headed by an Associate Administrator, which will be responsible for planning, budgeting, and managing activities undertaken to accomplish the above goals.

The Administrator will be required to establish a process for conducting competitions for innovative, cost-effective mission concepts to accomplish the above goals, which will be open to industry, academia, nongovernmental research organizations, NASA Centers, and other government organizations.

International participation and cost sharing will be encouraged. The Administrator will be required to establish an independent panel to conduct a merit-based competitive review of the proposals submitted and an independent external review of the cost estimate and funding profile of the competitively selected proposals. These findings must be reported to Congress.

The implementation plans of the competitively selected proposals must be updated every year by the manager of the project and the Administrator must have an independent external review panel review each of the updated implementation plans and report these findings to Congress.

The bill authorizes \$50 million for FY 2003 and \$200 million for FY 2004 to carry out these activities.

If we are ever going to break out of Earth orbit and conduct comprehensive human and robotic exploration of our solar system and universe, we need to overcome a serious obstacle. That obstacle is not technical, although human exploration will be very technically challenging. And the obstacle is not financial, although we need to ensure that human exploration is done in as cost-efficient and financially responsible a manner as possible. No, these aren't the real obstacles to success. The real obstacle is the lack of a commitment to get started. We don't need another national commission to come up with goals for human space flight beyond low Earth orbit—what we need is a national commitment to carrying out any one of the many worthy goals that have been articulated to date.

I want the United States to get started. And I hope that we can interest our international friends in working with us on this grand undertaking. Because space exploration is humanity's future—not just America's. But I am an American, and I want to make sure that at a minimum America steps up to the challenge of achieving our destiny in space.